Proterogyrinus



conception of a *Proterogyrinus*, by Dmitry Bogdanov

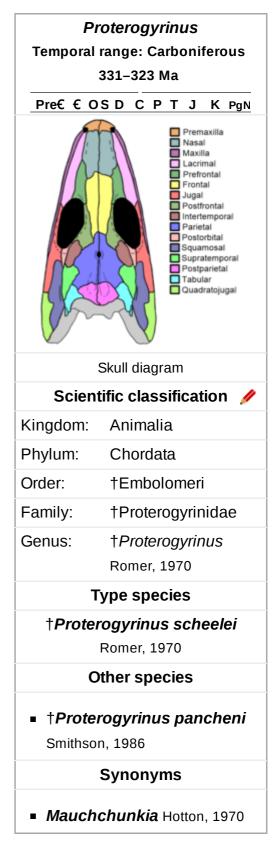
Proterogyrinus was extinct genus of early tetrapods from the order Embolomeri. Fossils have been found in Scotland. UK, and West Virginia, United States and date back to the Serpukhovian (mid-Carboniferous period) from about 331-323 million years ago.^[1] The genus was originally named by renowned vertebrate paleontologist Alfred Sherwood Romer 1970.^[2] A comprehensive redescription was later published Canadian paleontologist Robert Holmes in 1984.^[3] The generic

"*Proterogyrinus*" is <u>Greek</u> for "earlier wanderer" or "earlier <u>tadpole</u>". This name was chosen by Romer in keeping with a trend of naming long-bodied early tetrapods (such as <u>Fogyrinus</u> and *Crassigyrinus*) with the suffix "-*qyrinus*".^[2]

Romer hesitated from designating *Proterogyrinus* as a true embolomere, because its intercentra (the forward portion of each vertebra) were smaller than its pleurocentra (the rear portion). He used the group <u>Anthracosauria</u> to encompass embolomeres and their close relatives such as *Proterogyrinus*.^[2] However, other sources prefer a wider definition of Embolomeri similar in usage to Romer's Anthracosauria, thus counting *Proterogyrinus* as an embolomere.^[3]

Description

In most respects *Proterogyrinus* resembled other embolomeres such as *Archeria*, with a moderately elongated skull that was taller than that of other early tetrapods such as <u>colosteids</u> and <u>temnospondyls</u>. They were similar in size and shape to other prehistoric <u>amphibians</u> such as *Crassigyrinus* and *Eryops*, about two and a half meters (7–8 feet) long. This would have put them in line with the largest modern <u>lizards</u>. Members of the genus had strong limbs with several fully-<u>ossified</u> ankle and wrist bones. This would have given



Proterogyrinus the ability to walk and hunt on land. However, the presence of lateral line grooves and otic

<u>notches</u> which likely held <u>spiracles</u> show that they were probably more well-adapted for the water. The tail was long and tall, and was likely a powerful method of locomotion. The eyes were positioned high on the skull, supporting the idea that *Proterogyrinus* had an active lifestyle near the surface of the water.^[3]

References

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- 2. Romer, A.S. (30 April 1970). "A new anthracosaurian labyrinthodont, *Proterogyrinus scheelei*, from the Lower Carboniferous" (https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/51810758#page/135/mode/1up). *Kirtlandia*. **10**: 1–16.
- 3. Holmes, R. (2 November 1984). "The Carboniferous Amphibian *Proterogyrinus scheelei* Romer, and the Early Evolution of Tetrapods" (https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.1984.0103). *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological Sciences.* **306** (1130): 431–524. doi:10.1098/rstb.1984.0103 (https://doi.org/10.1098%2Frstb.1984.0103).

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